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AUTHOR Smith, Patricia A.; Midlarsky, Elizabeth
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ABSTRACT

Sex-role research has placed considerable emphasis on the measurement of maleness and femaleness within individuals, and upon measures of the degree of sex-role stereotyping within American society. The nature and type of conceptions of femaleness and maleness generated by blacks and whites in an open-ended questionnaire were investigated. Subjects (N=500) were black and white males and females from 13 vocational schools, community colleges and universities who generated 718 conceptions that were rated by a matched sample of 297 respondents on degree of maleness, femaleness, and social desirability. Results indicated that males engaged in more stereotyping in regard to their own gender than did females about males. Females used conceptions more reflective of female stereotyping than did males. Whites engaged in a higher degree of both male and female stereotyping than did blacks. Results suggest that female and male, black and white respondents differ in their conceptions of maleness and femaleness. Stereotyped images of maleness and femaleness still appear to exist, despite role changes by men and women in society. (Author/NRB)

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Sex-Role Conceptions of Black and White Males and Females

Patricia A. Smith and Elizabeth Midlarsky

Lynn Hospital and University of Detroit

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Sex-Role Conceptions of Black and White Males and Females

This study was designed to investigate the nature of conceptions of femaleness and maleness among females and males, and also among whites and blacks. Interest in this topic evolved out of recent sex-role research (cf. Mednick & Weissman, 1975) in which considerable emphasis has been placed on the measurement of maleness and femaleness within individuals, and upon measures of the degree of sex-role stereotyping within American society.

Interest in M-F conceptions did not appear until the turn of the century, with the advent of psychological studies on sex differences. Psychologists have worked with definitions of M-F that were handed down through tradition and folklore. From folklore and legend come descriptions of women as gentle, beautiful, calm and faithful; males have been described as aggressive, brave, forceful, and able (Biliauskas, Note 1). The same traditions carried the assumption that differences between male and female abilities are rooted in biology. Personality differences between men and women have also been viewed as biologically based (Freud, 1950). With this cultural background, investigators began their studies of psychological sex differences between men and women (Maccoby, 1966) and later moved to studies of M-F and sex-role development (Kagan, 1964).

Despite the recent surge of interest in societal conceptions of maleness and femaleness, several criticisms have been leveled against the studies performed thus far. For one, rarely have investigators empirically studied actual societal conceptions prior to developing scales. When prevailing conceptions have been investigated, the sampling has usually been limited to relatively smally numbers of respondents, largely consisting of individuals who were white, middle-class university students (e.g. Bem, 1974; Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson & Rosenkrantz, 1972; Sheriffs & McKee, 1957; Spence, Helmreich & Stapp, 1974).

An additional concern exists regarding the theoretical basis for investigators' prior conceptions of maleness and femaleness. Researchers have either emphasized a single, bipolar definition (Constantinople, 1973) or have employed the two-dimensional concept of androgyny, which treats maleness and femaleness as two independent dimensions that coexist within an individual (Bem, 1974, 1975). However, there appears to have been little effort to define concepts of M-F as generated by a more representative population cross-section, and to examine in an inductive way the actual nature of the conceptions.

The purpose of the present study was therefore to examine the nature of conceptions of femaleness and maleness generated by male and female, and white and black respondents. The study was also designed to provide a broad cross-sample of these conceptions from a more representative sample than has been found in past research. The following hypotheses were tested: (1) males and females differ significantly in their conceptions of femaleness and maleness, and (2) black and white individuals differ significantly in their conceptions of femaleness and maleness. The independent variables of the study were gender and race; the dependent variables were maleness conceptions scores and femaleness conceptions scores.

Method

In order to determine the nature of conceptions of femaleness and maleness, a two-stage sampling procedure was employed. First, a sample of 500 individuals generated lists of traits and behaviors of males and females, such as personality characteristics, occupational preferences, grooming behaviors, and the like. Then a sample of 297 individuals rated the conceptions generated by the first sample on scales designed to tap the degree of maleness or femaleness of each, as well as their social desirability if possessed by males on the one hand, or females, on the other.

Subjects

The two samples of subjects were selected from thirteen post-high school vocational schools, proprietary schools, universities, four-year colleges and community colleges in the Detroit metropolitan area. An attempt was made to obtain equal, or approximately equal numbers of black and white female and male individuals. Subjects were obtained from a sample of schools which had been selected in a manner designed to obtain a wide representation of ages, income levels, and other demographic characteristics.

The 500 participants in Sample 1 consisted of 251 males, 249 females, 251 whites and 249 blacks. The second sample, Sample 2, consisted of 297 participants selected from the same school settings as Sample 1. As for Sample 1, there were approximately 50-50 splits on the gender and race variables.

As planned, respondents in Sample 1 represented a broad cross-section in regard to demographic characteristics. For example, respondents ranged in age from 17 to 74 years of age, had 0 to 8 children, and had salaries from $5,000 to over $26,000 per year. Over one-half of the sample were currently employed in unskilled and skilled occupations.

Materials

Materials included a demographic information sheet, the maleness-femaleness conceptions form, and the maleness-femaleness conceptions rating form, all of which were developed for use in this study. Each respondent participating in the study had to read and sign an informed consent sheet.

The demographic information sheet was used in order to obtain background information from participants regarding their age, sex, race, school, major area of study, occupation, marital status, number of children, social class, and present income.

The maleness-femaleness conceptions form consisted of two sheets of paper,

one labeled "female list" and one labeled "male list," both of which provided space for 12 conceptions to be listed. This form was used by Sample 1 respondents to list their conceptions of what they saw as characteristic of females and as characteristic of males in American society. The order of the two lists was standard and appeared with the "female list" first and the "male list" second for all participants. Directions for the M-F form took about 10 minutes, and participants took an average of 20 minutes to complete the form.

The maleness-femaleness (M-F) conceptions rating scale is a measure developed for Sample 2 of the study in order to obtain an assessment of the degree of M-F (intensity rating) and the social desirability of the M-F conceptions generated by Sample 1. The rating scale appeared in booklet form, with separate lists of the female and male conceptions prepared to be rated on the dimensions of intensity and social desirability. Each page of the booklet had two seven-point scales on which each conception was rated. The intensity scale appeared as a bipolar scale with endpoints labeled "Not Very Masculine (or Feminine)" and "Very Masculine (or Feminine)." The second rating scale, also bipolar, was for the conception to be rated on its social desirability for a particular gender. The end points were labeled "Not Very Desirable" and "Very Desirable." The stapled booklet consisted of 12 to 13 pages of conceptions or approximately 239 conceptions for each subject. The purpose of the instrument was to obtain two ratings on each of the M-F conceptions in order to later compute an M-F conceptions score for each of the Sample 1 participants.

Procedure

Questionnaires were presented to all participants in both Sample 1 and Sample 2 by a 29-year-old white female doctoral student, who was the sole person entering the classes and collecting questionnaires for both parts of the study.

In the course of the work with Sample 1, the questionnaires were stapled together in booklet form, with the demographic sheet appearing first, and the

M-F conceptions form second. Instructions for the M-F conceptions form accompanied the form, and were also read aloud to participants.

Coding of the data began as soon as the first data were collected. In the first stage of coding, the lists of M-F conceptions were written out and tabulated for frequency of use. With those conceptions written out in sentence form or in long phrases, the investigators and student assistants shortened these to the best-known phrases or words that would be equivalent in meaning to the identified conception. Most conceptions were listed along with their associated synonyms. For example, such synonyms as "talks a lot," "chatty," "yacking all the time" were associated with the word "talkative," a female conception. When tallying the conceptions, if a respondent repeated a conception, or if both a conception and its synonym appeared in the same list, only one tally was made. Also, if a conception appeared as a negative, or with "not" or "less" before it, the word was not tallied. In the last instance, the rationale was that the negative of a conception did not imply its opposite. For example, "not aggressive" does not necessarily imply "passive," not does "less calm" necessarily imply "anxious." Both male and female assistants were used in making these judgments. In the final coding analysis, a total of 718 original conceptions (370 female and 348 male) were then prepared for Sample 2 to rate. As such, Sample 1 represented the "generators" of the M-F conceptions, and Sample 2 comprised the "raters."

For the second phase of the study, the M-F conceptions were then rated for their degree of masculinity for the maleness conceptions and the degree of feminity for the femaleness conceptions, as well as their social desirability. Since the list of conceptions totaled 718, it was considered practical to run a pilot study for finding a suitable number of items that a participant could rate in 1 hour. Pilot research with undergraduate students at the University of Detroit revealed that one-half of the list was too long for a single person to rate in one hour;

hence, each list presented to subjects in Sample 2 consisted of one-third of the total, or 239 conceptions (equally divided regarding maleness and femaleness conceptions). With a pool of 297 respondents (Sample 2), each conception had an equal chance of being rated 99 times.

With the design of the M-F rating scale completed, collection of data from Sample 2 was ready to begin. Participants for Sample 2 were obtained in a manner similar to the procedure for Sample 1. Instructors in the same settings were contacted for permission to use new classes of students. The same investigator entered classes, explained directions, and collected questionnaires. Total testing time took about one hour.

After collection of these data, the M-F rating scale was then prepared for coding and tabulation. For each of the twice-rated conceptions, a mean rating based on 297 ratings was calculated to obtain the mean intensity of each conception and its mean social desirability. The two ratings then became part of the statistical analysis of the M-F conceptions.

Results

Description of the Data

A total of 718 conceptions were obtained from Sample 1. This list included 370 conceptions of femaleness, and 348 conceptions of maleness. These were derived as unique responses from the sum total of 10,732 responses generated by Sample 1. The range for frequency of use of the M-conceptions was 1 to 146; the mean frequency was $\bar{X}$ = 15.06. The range of frequency of use for the F-conceptions was 1 to 180; the mean frequency was $\bar{X}$ = 14.89.

Analysis was also made of the number of M-conceptions and F-conceptions listed by the male and female, and white and black respondents. The mean number of M-conceptions generated per respondent was $\bar{X}$ = 10.46 (S. D. = 2.81). Means for the cross-groups were: black males, $\bar{X}$ = 9.90 (SD = 2.90); black females, $\bar{X}$ = 10.27 (SD = 2.36); white males, $\bar{X}$ = 10.31 (SD = 2.66); white females, $\bar{X}$ = 11.54 (SD = 3.60). The mean number of F-Conceptions generated per respondent was 11.00

(SD = 2.79). Means for the cross-groups were: black males, $\bar{X}$ = 10.59 (SD = 2.71); black females, $\bar{X}$ = 11.27 (SD = 2.68); white males, $\bar{X}$ = 10.58 (SD = 2.47); white females, $\bar{X}$ = 11.66 (SD = 3.29).

For part two of the study, descriptive data were obtained on the mean intensity and social desirability ratings by Sample 2 (N = 297). The mean intensity rating for the 370 F-conceptions was $\bar{X}$ = 4.76, SD = 1.04. The mean intensity rating for the 348 M-conceptions was $\bar{X}$ = 4.88, SD = 0.83. The mean social desirability rating for the M-conceptions was $\bar{X}$ = 4.46, SD = 1.23. The mean social desirability rating for the M-F conceptions was $\bar{X}$ = 4.45, SD = 1.17.

Derivation of the M and F Conceptions Scores

An F-conceptions and an M-conceptions score were each calculated for respondents in Sample 1. The scores were derived from the M-F items listed in each respondent's M-F conceptions form. Each score was obtained as a function of the frequency of each conception generated, and multiplied by its mean intensity rating. Conceptions associated with high intensity and/or frequency for a given gender are considered here to represent "stereotyped" conceptions.

For each respondent's list of M-F conceptions, the frequency of each conception was multiplied by its intensity rating, and the products were summed. The sum score for the conceptions was then divided by the total number of conceptions generated in the respective list. This was done separately for the maleness list and then for the femaleness list of each participant. The resultant two scores were labeled, respectively, the M-conceptions score and the F-conceptions score. Each score was thus made up of frequency, intensity, and number of conceptions generated in a list. The range of F-conceptions scores across the respondents in Sample 1 was from 81.58 to 692.30; $\bar{X}$ = 351.94 (SD = 106.48). The range for the M-conceptions scores was 73.01 to 526.50; $\bar{X}$ = 275.83 (SD = 83.46).

Analysis of the Conceptions Scores

Data were analyzed using 2 x 2 analyses of variance, with gender as factor 1

and race as factor 2. Two analyses of variance were calculated, on the M-conceptions scores and the F-conceptions scores, respectively. A summary of the analysis of variance for the M-conceptions scores is presented in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

As seen in Table 1, significant main effects were found for both gender and race, both at the $p < .001$ confidence levels. For gender, the male mean score of 289.23 was significantly higher than the mean score of 260.58 for females, indicating that males engaged in more "stereotyping" in regard to their own gender than did females about them. For race, the mean score of 290.35 for whites was significantly higher than the mean of 261.19 for blacks, indicating that whites engaged in a higher degree of "male stereotyping" than did blacks. The interaction of gender and race was not statistically significant ($F < 1$).

A summary of the analysis of variance for the F-conceptions scores is presented in Table 2. As seen in the table, there were significant main effects of gender ($p < .01$) and of race ($p < .05$). For gender, the female mean score of 364.09 was significantly higher than the male mean of 339.92, indicating that females used conceptions more reflective of "female stereotyping" than did males. For race, the white mean score of 359.65 was significantly higher than the mean for blacks of 344.20, indicating that whites engaged in a higher degree of "female stereotyping" than did blacks. The interaction of gender and race was not statistically significant ($F < 1$).

Insert Table 2 about here

Differential Usage of Conceptions

Further analyses were completed to test in greater detail what differences male and female, and black and white respondents exhibited in their conceptions of femaleness and maleness. Since the analyses of variance indicated that these groups differed in their overall conceptions, chi square analyses were used next to determine the specific conceptions on which the groups differed.[2] In performing these analyses, all conceptions in Sample 1 which had a minimum frequency of 20 or greater were selected from the total of 718. Each of these conceptions was then placed in a 2 x 2 table with each analyzed for its proportionate use and nonuse by gender and by race. This was done separately for the conceptions of femaleness and the conceptions of maleness.

Conceptions of femaleness. Table 3 presents the F-conceptions used with significantly different frequency by females and males, blacks and whites, as well as those conceptions used by both females and males, blacks and whites.

Insert Table 3 about here

In comparison with blacks, whites were significantly more likely to characterize women as passive ($p < .001$), concerned about their appearance ($p < .01$), neatly dressed ($p < .01$), expressive of emotions ($p < .01$), and liking to shop ($p < .01$). Interestingly, blacks did not describe women as passive at all, in comparison with whites, for whom passivity was apparently salient. In comparison with whites, blacks emitted conceptions whereby women are persons who watch soap operas ($p < .05$), and who are involved with the church as both a social and religious interest ($p < .01$). In regard to

conceptions for which no significant differences were found between blacks and whites, one sees the woman as a homemaker and mother who is sensitive to the feelings of others, likes to talk, dresses fashionably, and is employed as a secretary.

Males more often than females described women as talkative and gossipy ($p < .05$), moody and unpredictable ($p < .01$), insecure and easily confused ($p < .05$), sociable ($p < .05$), and sexy ($p < .05$). Examination of the social desirability valences in the table indicate that the preponderance of conceptions held by men of women, particularly in the area of personality characteristics, are negative. Indeed, only two conceptions held by males, "sexy" and "sociable" were rated as socially desirable. In contrast to males, females described women significantly more frequently as working as teachers ($p < .01$), and as participating in social activities (e.g., luncheons with friends, club meetings, tupperware parties; $p < .01$). Most frequently, though, women were described by the women in this sample as homemakers and mothers ($p < .05$) who enjoy sewing as a pastime ($p < .05$), who are learning to play tennis ($p < .05$), and who are attending school ($p < .05$). In regard to high-frequency conceptions for which no significant differences were found in usage by males and females, women were described as sensitive (e.g., thoughtful, good listener, sincere), nurturant, conscious of their physical appearance, dressing according to the fashion, as well as engaged in shopping (for clothes, food, household items), and employed as secretaries.

Conceptions of Maleness. Table 4 presents the M-conceptions used with significantly different frequency by females and males, blacks and whites, as well as those conceptions used by both females and males, blacks and whites.

Insert Table 4 about here

In comparison with blacks, whites were significantly more likely to characterize males as unexpressive of their emotions ($p < .01$), aggressive ($p < .05$), competitive ($p < .05$), independent ($p < .05$), and status-conscious (e.g., materialistic) ($p < .05$). Interestingly, blacks did not associate maleness with competitiveness and aggressiveness to the same extent as did whites (e.g., aggressive, competitive, status-conscious). In comparison with whites, blacks emitted conceptions whereby men are fathers ($p < .05$), employed as factory workers ($p < .01$), spend time with the family ($p < .01$), are clothes conscious ($p < .01$) and play basketball ($p < .01$). In regard to conceptions for which no significant differences were found between blacks and whites, both saw men as domineering, leaders, in good physical shape, breadwinners, and conceited.

Males more often than females described men as aggressive ($p < .01$), work-minded (ambitious, busy) ($p < .01$), leaders ($p < .05$), who are competitive ($p < .01$), and like to play sports ($p < .05$). These conceptions suggest a strong, achieving, and active person. In contrast to males, females saw men significantly more frequently as doctors ($p < .05$), lawyers ($p < .01$), playing in sports such as football ($p < .05$), basketball ($p < .01$), and clothes-conscious ($p < .05$). These conceptions describe men in relation to activities and occupations. In regard to high frequency conceptions for which no significant differences were found in usage by males and females, men were described as domineering, unexpressive of their emotions, drinking, in good physical shape and as breadwinners.

Discussion

In general, the results of this study supported the hypotheses that female and male, black and white respondents differ in their conceptions of femaleness

and maleness. Significant differences were found in regard to the primary dependent variables, the F-conceptions scores and the M-conceptions scores. The analysis of the 718 conceptions generated by a large and heterogeneous sample of respondents provided abundant data regarding the prevalence and nature of conceptions among the groups studied.

Conceptions of Females and Males

Results also indicated that when men were asked to describe maleness, they were more likely to use a higher number of popular conceptions than were females. The same finding applies to women; when asked to describe femaleness, women were more likely to use a greater number of popular conceptions of femaleness in comparison to men. This implies that it may be easier to identify or stereotype one's own gender than the other (cf. Deutsch & Gilbert, 1976; Gilbert, Deutsch & Strahan, 1978; Nicol & Bryson, Note 3).

Conceptions of femaleness by men and women. The emphasis placed by men in this study on relatively negative conceptions that predominantly refer to personality traits (e.g., "haughty," "demanding," and "insecure") is consistent with findings by other investigators. Previous studies revealed views by men of women as "passive" (Neufield, Langmeyer & Seeman, 1974; Sheriffs & McKee, 1957; Steinman, Levi & Fox, 1964), as "sexual creatures" (Sheriffs & McKee, 1957), and as possessors of negative personality characteristics (Rosenkrantz, Vogel, Bee, Broverman & Broverman, 1968).

In describing femaleness, women in this study used fewer personality traits than did men. The 10 conceptions of femaleness cited more frequently by women than men were all rated socially desirable, as well. In regard to personality, women conceived of females as "responsible" and "organized." The remaining conceptions selected by women dealt with social, home, or sports activities. All of the most frequently used conceptions referred to roles for women that are

regarded as traditional in this society, e.g., "homemaker" (N = 180). Thus, it is possible to infer from these data that women conceive of themselves in more positive terms than men view them, using conceptions that refer primarily to social roles and activities more frequently than traits.

The next comparison looked for those conceptions of femaleness that both men and women listed with approximately equal frequency. There was consensus that women express their emotions and are "sensitive" and "affectionate." Women are also characterized as being "conscious of appearance and clothes" and as being "career-minded"; both women and men respondents listed "secretary" as a high frequency occupation. Both genders said that women enjoy the activities of "cooking" and "shopping" and are undesirably "passive" at times. This comparison indicates that although there are certain conceptions which are used more often by women than by men, and vice-versa, certain conceptions are agreed upon by both genders regarding the gender specified.

Conceptions of maleness by women and men. In their descriptions of maleness, men in this study used primarily socially desirable personality characteristics associated with achievement. These characteristics appear similar to the "competency cluster" by Rosenkrantz et al (1968), associated with characteristics of the "typical male" in American society. The only negatively-rated conception was "risk-taker." In general, then, men described men as possessing strong adaptive personalities and interesting life styles.

Conceptions of maleness generated by women were more frequently action-oriented, and included fewer personality traits than the conceptions listed by men. Two of the socially undesirable personality conceptions for maleness were "chauvinistic" and "likely to avoid housework and taking care of children." On the positive side, maleness was identified by references to sports and to such occupations as "doctor" and "lawyer." The descriptions of maleness by women

concentrated primarily on activities and occupations, rather than on traits.

The next comparison focused on those conceptions of maleness used with similar frequency by women and men respondents. The desirable conceptions cited by both genders included "breadwinner for the home," "physical fitness," "capacity for the enjoyment of sex," and, to a lesser degree, "sensitivity to the feelings of others." On the other hand, both genders selected two characteristics rated socially undesirable by respondents in Sample 2, "unexpressive of emotions," and "conceited." Other undesirable conceptions included "factory worker," "like to drink," and, to a lesser degree, "not taking care of physical appearance." In contrast to the portrait of maleness provided by men, in the profile composed of conceptions generated by both men and women, the picture of maleness was somewhat more limiting and unhappy.

Conceptions of Blacks and Whites

Results indicated that whites had higher maleness and femaleness conceptions scores than did blacks. What this means is that whites used more popular or stereotyped conceptions in describing both females and males than did blacks. A possible explanation for this finding is that black men and women do not perceive the genders to be as different from one another as do whites. O'Leary and Harrison (Note 4), as well as Unger (1979) and Staples (1978) found that blacks differentiate less between the genders than do whites when using M-F stereotypes. Another possible explanation for the present results is that blacks may have generated fewer responses on this type of written test because of lower reading and writing skills; the smaller number of responses may have created the appearance of a lesser degree of differentiation.

Conceptions of femaleness by blacks and whites. Conceptions of femaleness used more frequently by whites than by blacks included such undesirable charac-

teristics as "passive," "status conscious," and "self conscious," and the desirable characteristics "expressive of emotions" and "concerned about family." Whites also described women as often shopping for clothes and food. These results may provide a view of the stereotype of the American woman as held by white men and women today.

Black men and women selected two conceptions of femaleness significantly more often than whites. The first one, "watching soap operas," suggests a socially undesirable perception of the woman home during the daytime occupied primarily with TV viewing. The second conception, involvement with "church activities," suggests an identification of women with religious and community activities. Even though investigators have noted that the church may be generally losing importance in the black community (O'Leary, 1977), this study indicates that blacks still apparently associate women with the church and religion, at least more than whites do.

The two conceptions of femaleness most ofter cited by both black and white respondents were "homemaker" and "mother." Also cited were such desirable characteristics as "sensitivity," "affectionateness," and "sociability," and the socially undesirable trait of "talkativeness." Cited at lower frequencies were conceptions of women as "fashionable dressers," and as "secretaries." Lowest in frequency among both black and white respondents were the conceptions "aggressive" and "engaging in cooking activities."

Conceptions of maleness. Included among the conceptions of maleness given more frequently by whites than by blacks were three that are similar to the "competency cluster" by Rosenkrantz, Vogel, Bee, Broverman, & Broverman (1968): i.e., "aggressive," "independent," and "competitive." However, in contrast to these positive traits are the high frequency undesirable conceptions--"drinking," "poor appearance," "unexpressive of emotions," and "quick-tempered."

In contrast to whites, blacks selected conceptions of maleness related most often to occupations, such as "factory worker." This result may be attributed, at least in part, to the region in which the sample was drawn. That is, Detroit is an urban industrial area employing a large number of male factory workers. Other occupations cited, albeit with considerably lower frequency, were "politician," and "truck driver;" the latter was rated socially undesirable.

Men were frequently characterized by blacks as "clothes conscious." Black respondents also described men by their family roles: "fathers" who "spend time with their family," "like their children," and are "pleasant." In their free time they "play basketball." The profile of men drawn by blacks in this study does not accord with past research, which suggested that blacks generally have a negative view of the male (Turner & Turner, 1975; O'Leary & Harrison, Note 4). In fact, except for the negative values given the occupations of truck driver and factory worker, the conceptions of men held by black respondents in this study were generally positive. However, the average frequency of appearance for these conceptions was low ($\bar{X}$ = 39), possibly attributable to the suspected lower generation of items by blacks in comparison to whites.

The final comparison sought those conceptions of maleness generated by both blacks and whites. These included negative conceptions of men as "domineering" and "conceited." "Being sensitive to others," a desirable characteristic, was cited less frequently. Men were seen by both races as "breadwinners" and "money managers" in the home, and as "leaders" in the community. They enjoy "football," and "basketball" and become "doctors." One may infer that there are indeed conceptions of maleness which reflect consensus by blacks and whites, wherein blacks appear to share the dominant culture's achievement orientation and middle-class values. This influence could be systematically

examined in future research by asking blacks to describe maleness according to what they think are black conceptions, and according to what they think are white conceptions.

Comparison with Previous Research and Conclusions

Despite claims of sex-role changes among men and women in American society (Mason & Czajka, 1976), this study indicates that current conceptions of femaleness and maleness may have marked similarities to earlier conceptions. The view of men found by this study as "aggressive," "work minded," and "capable of leadership" is composed of characteristics similar to those attributed to men in earlier research (Bem, 1974; Rosenkrantz et al, 1968; Sheriffs & McKee, 1957; Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1974). The current conceptions of femaleness identified here, stressing "sensitivity," "affectionateness," and "consciousness of appearance," are also similar to earlier stereotypes of women (Bem, 1974; Rosenkrantz et al, 1968; Spence et al, 1974).

Looking separately at female conceptions of femaleness, we find an interesting contrast between the study reported here and two other efforts -- one published in 1957 by Sheriffs & McKee, and a second published in 1968 by Rosenkrantz and associates. In both of these investigations, women apparently described themselves in socially desirable terms. Women in 1957 used negative characterizations of themselves (subordinate, passive, irresponsible), and in 1968 continued to emphasize such undesirable traits as emotional, passive, easily hurt and dependent. In the sample described in this study, women generated positive conceptions of personality traits, and also emphasized socially desirable recreational and social activities in descriptions of their own gender. The more positive depiction of women by women stands in marked contrast to the relatively negative portrait of women provided by men.

This study also indicates that factors other than personality traits are frequently used spontaneously in describing males and females. In addition, it appears that men and women may emphasize the dimensions differently with, for example, men choosing trait terms more frequently than women, and women choosing descriptors of activities more frequently than men. Since five categories of terms evolved from inspection of the data, it seems that descriptions of men and women need not be limited to a two-category approach--"masculinity-femininity"--which relies, in turn, solely on personality traits. The separate lists of conceptions generated in this study by men and women contained items designating cognitive, intellectual, personality, occupational and other factors in the manner anticipated by Hyde and Rosenberg (1976). Results also support findings by Coffman and Levy (1972) that conceptions of maleness-femaleness may include such characteristics as personal appearance, emotional responsiveness, emotional closeness, vocations, values, and sexual interests, in addition to personality traits. Examination of the lists generated in the present study reveals that they contain descriptors similar to those cited by Coffman and Levy (1972). Also found here were personality characteristics, physical attributes, recreational activities, aspects of social awareness, and family roles and activities.

In comparison with previous research on sex-role conceptions of blacks, the results of this investigation did not support the finding that blacks exhibit more of the instrumental than expressive dimension of maleness/femaleness than do whites (cf. Beal, 1973; Melton, 1976; Scanzoni, 1975; Murray, Note 2). Furthermore, these results did not replicate previous findings that blacks exhibit largely negative conceptions of males (Turner & Turner, 1975; O'Leary & Harrison, Note 4). Our results indicate that at least on the basis of the sample studied here, the image of the black male as "shiftless" and of the black female as "heroic/matriarchal" (Smith & Millham, 1979) may well be myth rather than reality.

In conclusion, this study presented a close examination of the types of conceptions of maleness and femaleness currently in use. The study attempted to identify a wider range of conceptions, using a large, heterogeneous, biracial sample of respondents, than has been the case in past research. An open-ended questionnaire technique was used to permit relatively spontaneous expression of conceptions by participants. The design permitted scrutiny of male and female conceptions by each gender, and differences and similarities were noted. Differences and similarities were identified and contrasted in regard to black and white respondents, as well. Results indicated that stereotyped images of maleness and femaleness still appear to exist, despite evidence of role changes by men and women in our society.

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Table 1

Analysis of Variance of Maleness Conceptions Scores

by Gender and Race of Subject

Source of variation	df	SS	MS	F-ratio
Gender of subject (A)	1	78370.000	78370.000	11.81***
Race of subject (B)	1	69440.063	69440.063	10.468***
Gender x race (A x B)	1	1189.132	1189.132	0.179
Error	496	3290189.000	6633.445	
Total	499	3476082.000	6966.094	

***$p < .001$.

Table 2

Analysis of Variance of Femaleness Conceptions Scores

by Gender and Race of Subject

Source of variation	df	SS	MS	F-ratio
Gender of subject (A)	1	96741.500	96741.500	8.688**
Race of subject (B)	1	53587.691	53587.691	4.813*
Gender x race (A x B)	1	8768.313	8768.313	0.787
Error	496	5522745.000	11134.566	
Total	499	5658107.000	11338.891	

*$p < .05$.

**$p < .01$.

Table 3

Conceptions of Femaleness by Gender and Race Groups

Femaleness Conceptions[a]					
Whites[b]	Blacks[c]	Whites and Blacks[d]	Males[e]	Females[f]	Males and Females[g]
(+) conscious of appearance	(-) soap operas	(+) homemaker	(-) talkative	(+) homemaker	(+) conscious of appearance
(+) shopping	(+) church activities	(+) mother	(+) sociable	(+) mother	(+) secretary
(-) passive		(+) secretary	(-) moody	(+) tennis	(+) sensitive to feelings of others
(+) expressive of emotions		(+) fashionable dresser	(+) sexy	(+) teacher	(+) affectionate
(+) neatly dressed		(+) sensitive to feelings of others	(-) insecure	(+) sewing	(+) fashionable dress
(+) worry about self and family		(-) talkative	(-) demanding	(+) social activities	(+) shopping
(-) status-conscious		(+) sociable	(-) haughty	(+) higher education	(+) career-minded
(-) self-conscious		(+) affectionate	(-) argumentative	(+) responsible	(-) passive
		(+) aggressive	(-) talk on telephone	(+) bowling	(+) cooking
		(+) cooking	(-) non-sports-minded	(+) organized	(+) expressive of emotions

[a](-) negative social desirability; (+) positive social desirability.

[b]n = 251.

[c]n = 249.

[d]n = 251.

[e]n = 249.

[f]Conceptions which both whites and blacks list as characterizing females.

[g]Conceptions which both males and females list as characterizing males.

Table 4

Conceptions of Maleness by Gender and Race Groups

Maleness Conceptions[a]					
Whites[b]	Blacks[c]	Whites and Blacks[d]	Males[e]	Females[f]	Males and Females[g]
(+) aggressive	(-) factory worker	(-) domineering	(+) aggressive	(+) football	(-) domineering
(+) play sports	(+) clothes conscious	(+) good physical shape	(+) play sports	(+) doctor	(+) good physical shape
(+) work-minded	(+) father	(+) breadwinner	(+) work-minded	(+) clothes conscious	(-) unexpressive of emotions
(-) expressive of emotions	(+) basketball	(-) conceited	(+) leaders	(+) lawyer	(-) factory worker
(-) drink	(+) spend time with family	(+) football	(+) competitive	(-) chauvinistic	(-) drink
(+) cars	(+) pleasant	(+) leaders	(+) date women	(+) basketball	(+) breadwinner
(+) competitive	(+) like children	(+) doctor	(+) independent	(+) higher education	(-) conceited
(-) poor personal appearance	(+) politician	(+) sensitive to feelings of others	(+) athletic	(+) golfing	(+) like sex
(+) independent	(-) truck driver	(+) money manager	(+) dependable	(-) bars	(-) poor personal appearance
(+) status conscious		(+) basketball	(-) risk taker	(+) sexy	(+) sensitive to feelings of others
				(-) avoid housework/ child care	

[a](-) negative social desirability; (+) positive social desirability.

[b]n = 251.

[c]n = 249.

[d]Conceptions which both whites and blacks list as characterizing males.

[e]n = 251.

[f]n = 249.

[g]Conceptions which both males and females list as characterizing males.

Footnotes

[1]Correspondance should be addressed to Elizabeth Midlarsky, Department of Psychology, University of Detroit, Detroit, Michigan 48221.

[2]The extensive tables of chi-square data on which this section is based are available from the authors.